ASCLEPIAS HIRTELLA (APOCYNACEAE) NEWLY DOCUMENTED FOR THE FLORA OF TEXAS

Matt White

882 Hwy 50
Campbell, Texas 75422 U.S.A.
mwhite@parisjc.edu

ABSTRACT

Asclepias hirtella (Pennell) Woodson is reported as new for Texas in Lamar, Fannin and Henderson counties.

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Se cita *Asclepias hirtella* (Pennell) Woodson como nueva para Texas en los condados de Lamar, Fannin y Henderson.

Asclepias hirtella (Pennell) Woodson was not reported for Texas by Correll and Johnson (1970), Jones et al. (1997), Diggs et al. (1999), or Turner et al. (2003). Recent field work at Camp Maxey, a Texas Army National Guard facility in Lamar County, has revealed the presence of the species in open *Schizachyrium scoparium* grassland, where it was rare (Fig. 1). The plants were growing in soils mapped as Bernaldo fine sandy loam, "a brown, slightly acid fine sandy loam" found on the "tops and sides of ridges" (Ressell 1979), situated atop an underlying geology of Blossom Sand (Shelby et al. 1966). Common forb associates included *Solidago nitida*, *Vernonia texana*, *Liatris elegans* var. *elegans*, *Polygala incarnata*, and *Rudbeckia hirta*.

Asclepias hirtella and the closely related *A. longifolia* are in the subgenus *Acerates* (Ell.) Woodson. *Asclepias hirtella* is "a species of Midwestern prairies and barrens" (Weakley 2007) and grows in bottomland as well as upland prairies, glades, pastures, roadsides and railroads (Yatskievych 2006). It occurs from Georgia to Louisiana, Oklahoma, Kansas, Minnesota, southern Ontario, West Virginia and Tennessee. *Asclepias longifolia*, by contrast, occurs along the Gulf and Atlantic coastal plain (Woodson 1954) from southeast Texas through southern Delaware. Turner et al. (2003) mapped collections of *A. longifolia* from Newton, Jasper, Tyler, Hardin, Liberty and Galveston counties as well as what he considered a very disjunct collection from Fannin County. An examination of the Fannin County specimen indicates that it is actually *A. hirtella*, as is an additional Henderson County collection cited below. These specimens suggest the species is rare in northern and eastern Texas.

This species appears to occur with more regularity in nearby Oklahoma and has been collected several times in nearby McCurtain, Pushmataha and Atoka counties (Pennell 1919; Hoagland et al. 2004). In McCurtain County the species is found at Red and Grassy Slough in the Red River Valley (Hoagland & Johnson 2004), both of which are very close to Texas.

The following key, taken from Woodson (1954), should allow these similar species to be identified:

1. Inflorescences lateral, numerous, and dense and nearly spherical, the flowers very slightly tinted with purple; plants relatively stout _____ **Asclepias hirtella**
1. Inflorescences both terminal and lateral, the lateral rather few, rather lax and hemispherical, the flowers rather liberally tinted with purple; plants rather slender _____ **Asclepias longifolia**

Voucher specimens: **TEXAS. Fannin Co.:** 1 mi N of Monkstown on FM 79, in open valley and grassy areas, 19 May 1963, *D.S. Correll & H.B. Correll 27491* (LL). **Henderson Co.:** 9.5 mi S of Athens, low ground, sandy clay, 22 Aug 1951, *L.H. Shinners 19106* (BRIT). **Lamar Co.:** Camp Maxey TXARNG Training Facility in open grassland, 33.41675 N & 95.32904 W, 17 Aug 2007, *M. White s.n.* (BRIT).

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Fig. 1. Scan of *Asclepias hirtella* collected from Lamar County, Texas, 17 Aug 2007 (*Matt White s.n.*, BRIT).

Barney Lipscomb, whose careful editing greatly improved the manuscript. Amanda Neill found the collection from Henderson County. Special thanks to Bill Carr for tracking down the Correll and Correll specimen from Fannin County and for numerous suggestions on the manuscript. Joe Jackson, a librarian at Paris Junior College, for helping with interlibrary loans.

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